

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 06BEIRUT2443, TFLE01: AMINE GEMAYEL SAYS CEASE-FIRE SHOULD

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06BEIRUT2443**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06BEIRUT2443	2006-07-23 09:37	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Beirut

Appears in these articles:

[not](#)
[yet](#)
[set](#)

VZCZCXRO8579
OO RUEHAG RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK
DE RUEHLB #2443/01 2040937
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 230937Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4742
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMSOPCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 002443

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
NOFORN

NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/SINGH/HARDING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/21/2016

TAGS: [IS](#) [LE](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: TFLE01: AMINE GEMAYEL SAYS CEASE-FIRE SHOULD
SECURE BORDER FIRST, PRISONERS AND SHEBAA FARMS COME LATER

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey D. Feltman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
)

SUMMARY

¶1. (S/NF) In a 7/21 meeting, Amine Gemayel, former President of the Republic of Lebanon, told the Ambassador that diplomatic efforts to solve the current conflict should focus on securing a long term solution to the cyclical security crises along the Lebanese-Israeli border, with any discussions of prisoner exchanges and Shebaa Farms relegated to secondary status. Gemayel believes that Hizballah knows the current border status quo is untenable, and may soon be amenable to a cease-fire. Gemayel thinks that Lebanon's Sunni, Christian, Druze communities have all lost any confidence in Hizballah as a responsible partner, and that Lebanon's Shiite community is beginning to lose trust as in Hizballah well. But Gemayel reserved his greatest condemnation for Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) leader Michel Aoun, whom he described as "irresponsible" and "insane," predicting Aoun would suffer personal disgrace and political irrelevancy for his partnership of Hizballah. End summary.

THE VIEW FROM BIKFAYA

¶2. (S/NF) On July 21, former President Amine Gemayel received the Ambassador and emboff at his mountain home in Bikfaya. Sitting on the president's terrace overlooking the Maronite stronghold of Harissa, Gemayel told the Ambassador that neither the Israelis nor Hizballah gave any indication of being ready for a cease-fire. He said Hassan Nasrallah seems particularly entrenched, and is fully aware that the outcome of this campaign will determine the fate the Hizballah-Iranian axis in the Levant and across the region. Gemayel told the Ambassador that it would be a "disaster" for Lebanon if Hizballah wins; Hizballah activists would take complete control of Lebanon, and their Syrian and Iranian allies would be emboldened across the Middle East. Any reform initiatives, ranging from Beirut I to the prospects for a UNIIIC tribunal to investigate the Hariri assassination, "would be finished."

¶3. (S/NF) Gemayel said that Hassan Nasrallah had clearly deceived all of Lebanon during the National Dialogue, however, and that as a result, the Lebanese people are starting to turn against him. Listing the different communities his fingers, he said, "the Christians, the Sunnis, the Druze, even the Shia" have had enough. When faced with the devastation wrought by Israeli strikes, Gemayel said that Lebanon's Shia are beginning to question Hizballah's leadership and patronage as well, despite Nasrallah's promise of "clean" money (a swipe at Hariri wealth) to rebuild the south last week. Gemayel suggested that as once a cease-fire is achieved, an independent Shia political voice will quickly emerge, with many of the old Hizballah stalwarts disillusioned by Hizballah's inability to protect them from Israel's ferocious assault.

PROSPECTS FOR A CEASE-FIRE: LONG TERM SECURITY IN THE SOUTH

¶4. (S/NF) But as a caveat, Gemayel noted that Hizballah will only lose support if it suffers substantial military losses in its confrontation with Israel, and if the cease-fire itself is arranged in a way that denies them a political victory as well. As he discussed the likely points of a cease-fire agreement, Gemayel mentioned a Hizballah-Israel prisoner exchange and a final solution to Shebaa Farms. The Ambassador noted that Israel not agree to a cease-fire if the a priori conditions include rewarding Hizballah with a prisoner exchange and an Israeli withdrawal from Shebaa

Farms.

¶5. (S/NF) Gemayel agreed, and responded that a new security regime in south Lebanon with an expanded UNIFIL should be the top priority, with a prisoner exchange and Shebaa Farms offered to Hizballah as a reward for agreeing to a cease-fire and pull back from the border. Gemayel suggested that the international community and the U.N. should offer to

BEIRUT 00002443 002 OF 002

facilitate a resolution to the Farms' status, much as they did with the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border after the 1991 Gulf War. This way, he explained, not only could the rest of Lebanon corner Hizballah by making their weapons an obstacle to resolving the Shebaa Farms dispute, but by turning the issue over to the U.N., they could minimize Syria's ability to delay resolution as well.

¶6. (S/NF) Ultimately, however, Gemayel returned to the importance of using this crisis to negotiate a durable solution to the recurrent problems on Lebanon's southern border. "We went through this 1949, 1967, 1969 with the Cairo Agreement, 1982 and now today. No previous initiatives have helped. Not (UNSCR) 425, or any of the other resolutions." Gemayel said that full scale deployment of a strong and capable LAF along the border was the only real solution, and that the Lebanese people would need to show exceptional unity and focus in order to achieve this. He added that part of this unity would require that the Lebanese and the international community allow Hizballah and Lebanon's Shia community to "save face" through the cease-fire process and reconstruction phase. "They will be a political organization, and we should allow that," Gemayel said of Hizballah. "But their military organization must come to an end."

GEMAYEL'S REAL ENEMY?

¶7. (C/NF) For all the concern he expressed regarding Hizballah's military campaigns, however, President Gemayel seemed to reserve his real ire for Michel Aoun, leader of the Free Patriotic Movement. At several points during the one hour meeting, Gemayel variously referred to Aoun as "reckless," "sick," and "insane," adjectives he never leveled against Hizballah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah. Gemayel -- who was the head of state who appointed Aoun both army commander and caretaker prime minister -- described Aoun as a "shallow opportunist," and said Aoun was sticking by his agreement with Hizballah only because he had wagered that Hizballah and Syria would come out on top of the current crisis.

¶8. (C/NF) Gemayel said Aoun had cooperated with Mossad through the duration of Lebanon's civil war, and said he allied himself with Syria and Hizballah now because he believed they offered him the best chance at winning his long coveted seat in Baabda Palace. However, Gemayel said that Aoun's consistent support for Hizballah is quickly losing him the confidence of his parliamentary members and his Christian constituency. Unless he publicly and strongly distanced himself from Hizballah soon, Gemayel said that Aoun would be far down the path to political ruin. As the meeting drew to a close, Gemayel found time to throw one final dagger at Aoun before showing the Ambassador a framed picture of himself with President Reagan in 1982, "I have heard he's being blackmailed by the Syrians. I don't know if it's something he signed or something he did, but I think they are using him. It's what the Syrians do."

FELTMAN